

Food Labeling Guidelines for Packaged Food

Which Food Items Need Labels?

- All packaged food must be labeled.
- Labels must be in English.
- Packaged food include:
 - Items that food establishment bottles, cans, cartons, wraps or bags for off- site sale and consumption, such as in grocery stores or farmer markets.
 - Items that food establishment packages for sale, such as ready-to-eat sandwiches or salad kits, packets of spice blends, bagged and sealed bread, cookies, cakes, donuts, salsa or condiments in tubs or jars.
- Exception: Food selected by customers before bagging or packing do **not** require labels, such as deli meats and pre-made salads, made-to-order sandwiches, whole breads, cookies, cakes, donuts.

Why Do Packaged Food Need Labels?

- To inform consumers exactly what is inside the package.
- To prevent misleading information, misbranding and adulteration of food.
- To trace back to the point of production.

What Information do All Labels Need?

The big 5:

- Name of product / Identity.
- Net quantity.
- Ingredients, including major food allergens.
- Business name and address.
- Nutrition facts – include serving size, nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

The Principal Display Panel (PDP)

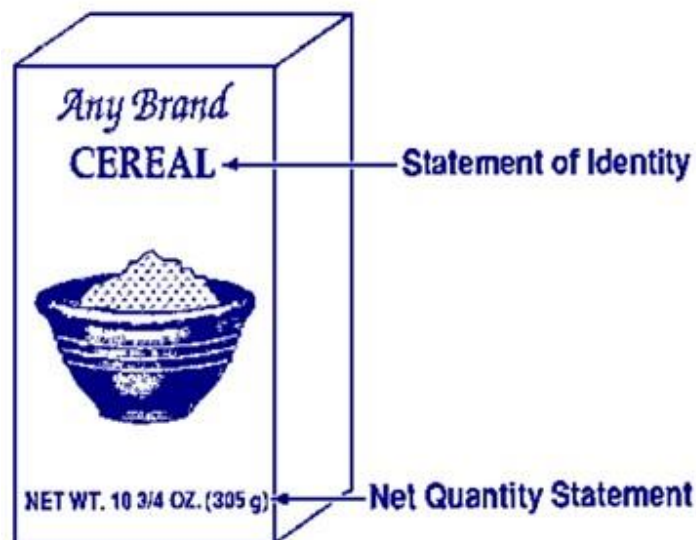
- ❖ The principal display panel (PDP) is the front of the package and is easily seen by the consumer at the time of purchase.
- ❖ The PDP includes the identity and the net quantity of contents.

1. Identity

- The common or usual name of the product contained in the package, such as soup, cereal.
- If no common name is given, use a descriptive name, such as “vanilla wafers”.
- Must be in the middle portion of the PDP’s front label.
- Must be in **bold**, be dominant and stand out from other print and pictures.

2. Net quantity of contents

- The amount of food in the container or package, without the packaging.
- Listed in both U.S. and metric scales.
- Listed either in net weight (ounces, pounds, grams, kilograms...), or net volume (fluid ounce, pints, milliliters, liters...), or net content (number of pieces).
- Located in the lower 30 percent of the PDP, with a minimum height of 1/16 inch.



The Information Panel (IP)

- ❖ The information panel is usually found to the right of the PDP.
- ❖ The IP includes the nutrition facts, ingredient list, and business name and address.

3. Ingredient list

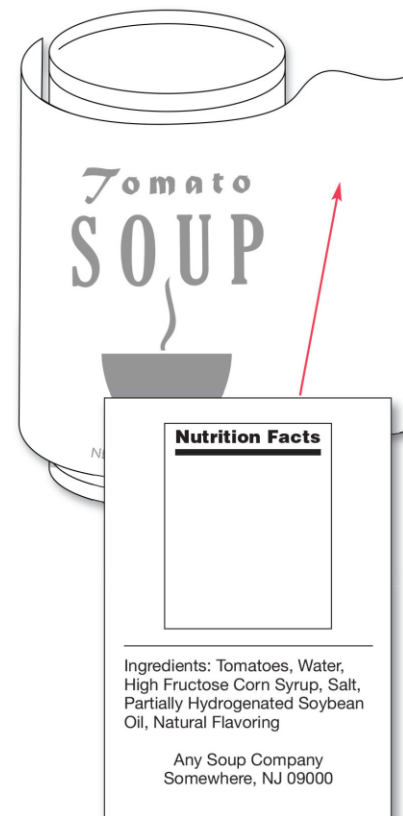
- List all ingredients in descending order (most to least) by weight.
- List all ingredients by their common or usual name, such as sugar (not sucrose).
- If less than 2% by weight, an ingredient can be mentioned at the end of the list, stating "contains 2% or less of ____."
- If present, any of the major 8 food allergens must be listed:
 - Milk
 - Eggs
 - Fish
 - Crustacean shellfish (declare type of fish, such as crab, shrimp, lobster...)
 - Peanuts
 - Tree nuts (declare type of nuts, such as almonds, coconut, pecans...)
 - Wheat
 - Soy

4. Nutrition facts

- Include serving size, calories, and key nutrients of the food.
- If required, nutrition facts panel is placed at the top of the IP.
- A nutrition facts panel may be exempt (See **Exemption** section).
- ***The WCHD does not assess the accuracy of the Nutrition label. The business is responsible to provide true and accurate information.***

5. Business name and address

- Print the business name, city, state, and ZIP code of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor.
- Usually locates at the bottom of the IP.



Exemption on Nutrition Facts Information

Packaged food may be exempt from providing a nutrition facts panel if:

- ❖ Produced by retailers with annual gross sales of less than \$500,000, or with annual gross sales of foods to consumers of less than \$50,000 per year.
- ❖ Produced by small businesses with fewer than 100 full-time equivalent employees, and fewer than 100,000 units of that product sold in the United States per year.
- ❖ Shipped in bulk and not for sale in bulk to consumers.
- ❖ Contain no significant amount of any nutrient, such as food coloring, spices, tea, coffee.
- ❖ Do not have a nutrient content claim or health claim, such as “low fat”, “gluten free”, “sugar free”, “contains 100 calories”, “heart healthy”, etc.
- ❖ Raw fruits, vegetables, and fish are exempt.

Additional Labeling

Depending on the food preparation process, some types of food need additional labeling information, such as:

- ❖ “Use by” date.
- ❖ Special handling instructions for products requiring refrigeration or freezing.
- ❖ Total percentage of juice on fruit or vegetable juice products.
- ❖ Health warning/disclaimers on raw and unpasteurized products
- ❖ Directions for preparation and use on infant formulas

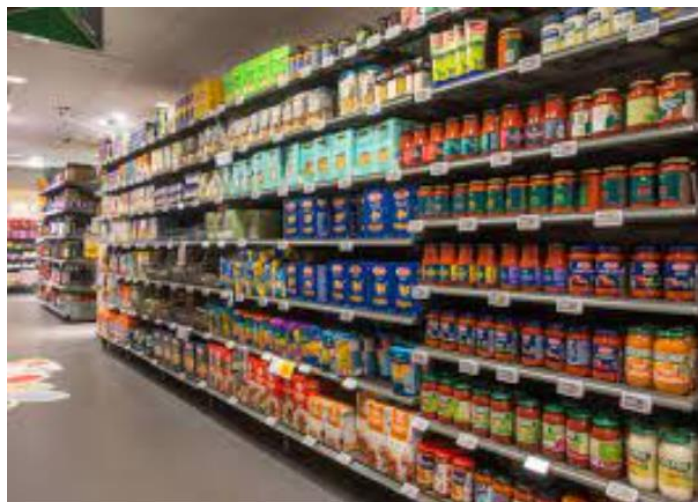
Resources

- ❖ FDA Food Labeling Guide: <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/guidance-industry-food-labeling-guide>
- ❖ Washoe County Health District Food Regulations: https://www.washoecounty.gov/health/files/ehs/regulations/Food_Regs_2016-09-09.pdf

Questions?

Contact us at Washoe County Health District, Food Safety Team (foodsafety@washoecounty.us)

Examples of Packaged food that require labels



Examples of packaged food that do not require labels

